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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES.

Baltimore, December, 1902.

ETYMOLOGIES.

Cheap, cope, coup, kaupatjan, caupo, κάπηλος, etc. II.

WE may now devote particular attention to some of these words, especially to the English representatives.

The Gothic verb *kaup-at-jan* is clearly only an intensive or rather iterative derivative of *kaupōn*. Compare OHG. *slagazen* < *slagōn*, *worphazen* < *worfōn*, *swan(ke)zen* < *swanken*, etc. That the iterative derivative should have been the usual form in the past and so become in Old Norse the regular preterit of the simple *kaupa*, is very interesting. It is due to the fact that we most frequently have occasion to use an iterative in recounting what we have observed and what, therefore, *has happened*. Compare the many Indo-European verbs that have reduplicated past tenses but simple presents. That the iterative retained in Gothic (*kaupatjan*) the meaning 'strike' longer than the simple verb (*kaupōn*) did, is perfectly natural. The word that meant simply 'strike' easily came to mean 'bargain,' 'barter,' etc.; but the word that meant to 'pummel' had first to lose its iterative force before it could assume a figurative meaning based on the notion of simple striking. When the simple *kaupōn* got the meaning 'barter,' *kaupatjan* took its place and in time followed its example in assuming the meaning 'barter', as is shown by the Finnish *kaupata*.

It has long been customary to derive English *cope* 'barter', 'buy', from LG. *cōpen*, and to regard *coup* 'barter', 'buy', as a northern dialectic variant of it. It is now, however, recognized that *coup* is from ON. *kaupa* = Goth. *kaupōn*, cf. the Oxford Dictionary under *coup* v. i. It is my desire to show that *cope* has the same origin and is not from Low German. The idea that we got the word *cope* from LG. *cōpen* was natural enough. In the first place, we have from Lydgate: *Flemynges began on me for to cry, Master, what will you copen or buy?*, and from Heywood *The Ducheman saith, that segging is good cope*. But, on second thought,

we must recognize that this is certainly no evidence that the English word was derived from the Dutch. As much might we to-day prove the German origin of the words *glass* and *beer* from a magazine article containing the following: "I was walking slowly on, when I was hailed by a German saloon-keeper, who asked me, 'Vill you haf a glass of beer?'" If English *cope* had come from Low German or Dutch, we should expect to find it most at home in the South or in the sea-port towns. As a matter of fact, the evidence of the living dialects proves that its habitat is that part of England where the Scandinavian influence was pronounced. It may be asked: How can we account for the *au* or *ou* of *coup* and the *ō* or *uo* of *cope* as both coming from Old Norse? This is, however, perfectly regular. Old-Norse *au* had become *ou* before it was carried over to England. In the few Old-Norse words containing *ou* that were introduced into English in Old-English times it appears that the English found in their *ō* the best substitute for the foreign *ou*, cf. OE. *lahcōp*, *landcōp*, < ON. *logkōp*, *landkōp*, and OE. *ōra* < ON. *gurar*, Kluge, Paul's *Grundriss*², i, p. 934. It was, however, in ME. times that Scandinavian words really became a part of English speech and by that time English had developed an *ou* diphthong out of OE. *og*, for example, in *boga* 'bow'. The ON. *ou* naturally fell in with this and, from that time on, *ou* developed alike in native words and in those adapted from Scandinavian. In parts of England, as in standard English, this *ou* became *ou*, later *ō*, which has since begun to break into a diphthong again. In parts of northern England and of Scotland, the *ou* remained unchanged and to this day differs but little from our *au* (or *ao*) < *ū* in *how*, *house*, etc., which in the districts involved still have *ū*. Thus the Scandinavian words *kaup* and *naut* (=OE. *cēap*, *nēat*) have come down to us dialectically as *coup* and *nout*, corresponding to the Scotch *bow* (pronounced practically as we pronounce the verb *to bow down*), and also as *cope* and *note* corresponding to the English *bow* (pronounced so as to rime with *go*.)

English *cope*, *coup*, 'strike', 'contend', 'fall heavily', presents at first sight more difficulty.

This word is generally derived without hesitation from OF. *couper*, *co(l)per*, 'strike,' now 'cut.' That the word has in part this origin, I would not dispute, especially when used of formal contests, as at tournaments, and in the figurative sense 'to cope with many difficulties.' The fact, however, that in the more original senses 'strike,' 'knock over,' 'tip over,' 'fall heavily,' the word is to-day confined to dialects spoken where Scandinavian influence was strong, makes it clear that as a common man's word it was of Scandinavian origin. It thus betrays the earlier meaning 'strike' that was displaced in the Old Norse of literature by the derivative meaning 'bargain,' 'barter,' 'buy'. In other words, English *cope*, *coup*, is a blending of an Old-French word and an Old-Norse word for 'strike'.

There is in German an interesting parallel to the change of 'strike' into 'tip over,' 'fall heavily', namely *kaupeln*, *käupeln*, 'tip', 'turn somersaults'; cf. also *kaipfen*, *koipfen*, *keibeln*, etc., 'stumble,' 'fall heavily'. Hildebrand's attempt to derive *kaupeln* (with original *au*) from *kaufe* (with *au* < *ü*) 'topknot', cannot stand. In the first place, if *kaupeln* were a verb derived from the noun *kaufe*, we should expect the same vowel, not one related by gradation. But the diversity that the various forms show in vowel and consonant makes it clear that we have to deal with slightly different imitations of the sound of striking and falling bodies. Compare *kaukeln*, *kokeln*, *gaukeln*, and the many other words in which the idea of tipping or tumbling merges into that of practicing the arts of professional tumblers, jugglers, etc. *Kaupeln* 'swap', 'trade', from older *küpfeln*, cannot be the same word as *kaupeln*, 'tip', which has original *au*. But there is no reason to doubt that we have in *kaupeln*, *küpfeln*, in *kauten*, *küten*, and the many like-sounding German words that mean 'swap' or 'trade secretly', simply more words that were originally imitations of the sound of striking and acquired the idea of 'bargain', 'barter', 'trade', just as we have found that *kaufen*, *swap*, and the others did.

It may be well to add a few words as to the theory of the Latin origin of Germanic *kaup*-. Any attempt to justify this theory must take the form of an effort to make a whole series of

improbabilities appear passably probable. First of all, we are confronted with the very obvious richness of Germanic forms throughout the Germanic territory, in contrast with the fact that there is no trace whatever of the word in any Romance language. The situation is not improved by referring, as Kluge does, to the fact that the name *Cæsar*, *Kaiser*, spread widely in Germanic while the Romance languages adhered to *Imperator*. The cases are entirely different. This use of the proper name was clearly an innovation and naturally established itself more easily where the ground was not already preempted, as it was by *Imperator* in Latin itself. If *caupo* had been a native Latin word, being the name of a person who was familiar to the common people, we may be sure there would be traces of its use in one or another Romance tongue. If, however, it arose as a designation of a class of foreign tradespeople in the city of Rome, we can easily understand why it did not spread throughout the Latin-speaking world. Moreover, it would not be strange at all if Germanic traders, of how humble a class, should on settling in Rome call themselves by what was in their tongue a dignified term for their calling; while, on the other hand, it would be absurd to suppose that Roman traders in foreign parts should designate themselves by what was in their own tongue almost a term of contempt (cf. the first edition of Kluge's dictionary).

Furthermore, the word *caupo*, *caupōnis*, is a derivative form that stands quite without the support of any more primitive word.¹ I know of no explanation of *caupo* as a pure Latin word that would stand the test of present ideas of phonological development. But it is on this *caupo* that all other related Latin words are based, for example, *caupōna*, *caupōnāria*, *caupōnius*, *caupōnor*, etc., most of which are rare or late. But Latin *caupo*, *-ōnis*, corresponds to the OHG. weak noun *konfo* < Gc. *kaup-an*-. The Latin theory compels us, first, to assume an unexplained Latin *n*-derivative. Then, to suppose that this word went north and became the South-German *konfo*, but, when it passed

¹ The exceedingly rare, or even questionable *cūpa*, *cūpa*, 'a female tavernkeeper and castanet-dancer' has no weight in this question. It is most natural to explain it as a jocose use of *cūpa* 'a wine cask;' in the form *cūpa* it was possibly influenced by *cūpo*, the popular form of *caupo*.

still farther north, assumed what Kluge calls a "verdeutlichendes Element" and became OE. *ġēapman*, etc. Furthermore, that, though starting in South Germany as an *n*-derivative stem designating a noun of agency, it gave birth to many Germanic forms, some of them of primitive type and signification, for example, *kauf*, *ġēap*, meaning 'trade', 'market', 'purchase', 'price', etc.! The theory of the Germanic origin supposes that the word started as a verb meaning first 'strike' and later 'bargain', and as an abstract noun meaning first 'stroke' and later 'bargain', and that when in different parts of the Germanic territory nouns of agency arose, in some it was a weak *n*-stem, in others a compound in *-man*, for example, OE. *ġēapman*, corresponding to *ġēapstōw* 'market place', *ġēapdæg* 'market day,' etc. The *n*-stem arose in the Germanic territory nearest to Italy and so it was this form that crossed the boundary and appeared in Latin. For there is nothing in the way of supposing that this Germanic word came to Rome exactly as at a later date *mango* came over the Alps, as I have shown in *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 22. It may be objected that a Germanic word might have come to Rome in post-Augustan times, but that we have traces of the use of *caupo* as early as the time of Plautus. This objection, however, ignores the well-known fact that in practically all countries the peddler, the huckster, and, in large cities at least, the inn-keeper, is very likely to be a foreigner,—and we know that this was equally true of Greece and Rome. These people pass from country to country long before armies invade and international relations are thought of.

In dealing with Latin *caupo*, scholars have sometimes associated with it Greek *κάπηλος* 'huckster', 'tavern-keeper.' How they would reconcile the Greek *α* with the Latin *au*, I do not know. There is, however, no need of it, for there is a very simple explanation of *κάπηλος*. It is formed from *κάπη* 'a crib for the food of cattle', 'a manger'. For this explanation it is immaterial whether *κάπη* was thus alluded to in a jocose way, as we sometimes speak of food as 'fodder' and a bed as a 'roost', or whether the *κάπηλος* was originally a man who provided travelers with the bulky food required for their beasts of burden and only incidentally with food for themselves.

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DID BOCCACCIO SUGGEST THE CHARACTER OF CHAUCER'S KNIGHT?

STANZA 40 of Book vi of the *Teseide* reads as follows:

"In cotal guisa co'suoi rugginoso
Dell'arme e del sudor venne in Atene:
E benchè bel non paia, valoroso
Chiunque il vede veramente il tene;
E fe', del modo suo non borioso
Ma umile, parlare a tutti bene:
Ben s'ammiraron della condizione
Chiunque il vide a sí fatto barone."¹

This is the last of six stanzas describing King Evander, who was one of the combatants in the tournament. The details mentioned in this stanza are so similar to the most prominent characteristics of Chaucer's knight, as he is described in the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* (ll. 43-78), as to suggest that Chaucer may have got the first conception of his knight from this source.

Boccaccio, in the previous five stanzas, has described a Greek warrior-king. He has told Evander's birthplace and parentage, how he was mounted and how he was armed. He has described his dress and that of his followers; and he has devoted especial attention to a description of Evander's shield, on which were depicted scenes illustrating former adventures and experiences.

There is nothing in these stanzas that is exactly the same as in Chaucer's *Prologue*. There are some correspondences but these might easily be accidental,—thus: (a) both are distinguished warriors. (b) Each has followers with him. (c) The previous deeds of valor are told for each, though in different ways—for Evander, it is done by a description of his shield; for the knight, the means is direct narration. But if Chaucer was influenced by this description of Evander, he could not possibly have made use of the details found in these five stanzas,—because the settings are too different. Boccaccio had described a Greek king going to a tournament, while Chaucer wished to present an ideal English knight riding in a company of pilgrims.

But the stanza first quoted seems to bear toward Chaucer a different relation from the other five. There are the following agreements:

¹ 'In this way, with his followers, he came into Athens, begrimed from his arms and from sweat. Although he did not look beautiful, whoever sees him holds him truly valorous. He was not haughty in manner but humble: he spoke well to all. Whoever saw him marveled at this in such a baron.'